

Malaea Agnes Keanaaina-Tolentino (with daughter, Cynthia Torres)
Excerpts from an Oral History Interview at Kealakehe
February 28, 2000 (with Kepā Maly)

Discussing Honokōhau and Kaloko Vicinity

The following narratives are excerpted from an interview conducted at aunty Malaea's home in Kealakehe. The interview recorded some of aunty Malaea's recollections of her youth, and life upon the lands of Honokōhau and Kaloko. And she shares recollections of the families of the land, their practices, and travel between the mauka and makai residences. The Keanaaina family has close connections with the Greenwell family, and has generational ties to several lands of the larger Kekaha region including, but not limited to Honokōhau, Kaloko, Kohanaiki and Kalaoa.

Malaea Agnes Keanaaina-Tolentino was born March 26, 1928. Following her birth, she was taken to her grandparents home at Honokōhau Nui (near the present-day Honokōhau junction), where she was raised by her paternal grandparents, William Nu'uanu Keanaaina Sr. and Malaea Noenoe Ha'au-Keanaaina. Malaea's parents, William Nu'uanu Keanaaina Jr. and Emily Kopa Kapanui-Keanaaina² lived on family land at Kalaoa. Malaea was the sixth of fourteen children (nine brothers and five sisters).

As a result of her being given in the custom of hānai to her grandparents, Malaea was raised (through her teen years) at Honokōhau. Her grandfather, William Nu'uanu Keanaaina Sr. worked for Frank Greenwell, ran the Honokohau Store, and butchered the Greenwell cattle for delivery to various families and businesses; and also leased the Kaloko Fishponds, which he operated as a family business.

As a youth, Malaea learned that prior to her birth, Joseph (Kanakamaika'i) and Makapini Kimona (native residents of Honokōhau Iki) had asked that Malaea be given to them as a hānai daughter, but she had already been promised to her paternal grandparents. As a child and teenager, Malaea would often go down to the shore at Honokōhau and Kaloko where she visited 'ohana, and the family fished.

Part of the reason for her journeys to Kaloko and Honokōhau was that her grandfather leased the Kaloko Fishpond from the Maguire Estate. In the process of working the fishpond and transporting fish to Kailua, she and her family regularly stayed at Kaloko. Their journeys across the land included both the mauka-makai trails and the old Alanui Aupuni (Coastal Government Road) between Kaloko and Kailua.

In a follow up interview on October 2nd 2000, at the shore of Kaloko, aunty Malaea was also joined by one of her elder brothers, Samuel Keanaaina, and together, they shared detailed descriptions of the Kaloko-Honokōhau vicinity, and practices of the native families of the land. Arrangements for both interviews were kindly made by aunty Malaea's daughter, Cynthia Torres.

² In the interview, aunty Malaea also discusses the family name Kapānui. It is her understanding (from an elder aunt), that the name Kapānui was part of a longer name, Ka-pā-nui-o-Kuakini (The-great-wall-of-Kuakini), associated with construction of the Kuakini Wall (a nationally recognized cultural-historical site of the Kona District).

The notes below, include direct quotes and summarized excerpts from the first interview between Malaea Keanaaina Tolentino and the interviewer (Kepā Maly). The follow up interview of October 2nd, is a detailed verbatim transcript, and follows the notes below.

(Family background and experiences during youth):

My grandfather was William Keanaaina and my grandmother was Malaea Ha'au.³ Kanakamaika'i and Makapini had wanted to hānai me, but I had already been promised to my grandparents. I didn't know this when I was real young. But I finally figured it out, and then was told. How I kind of knew was because of the way Kanakamaika'i them approached me, it was just like I was their own. Uncle Kanakamaika'i and aunty Makapini were very nice to me and always wanted me to come stay with them at the beach at Honokōhau. But I was kind of afraid of uncle Pali who also lived at Honokōhau. Because of that, I didn't want to go makai too often. When I went down, I would usually leave after a short while. I walked from Honokōhau past Kaloko and up the trail, mauka.

As a child, I lived with my kūkū mā. (Malaea shares detailed descriptions of the home and features around the house, and has also made several detailed sketches of the layout.) The house included two bedrooms (upstairs) and a master bedroom (downstairs); a cooking area; a coffee drying rack and the coffee mill (with machinery); a water tank; and the hale li'ili'i. Below the house, nearer the junction was the hale kū'ai (Honokōhau Store), that my grandfather ran.

My grandmother was a weaver. She and I went to collect her lauhala from Kohanaiki (Kalaoa side of the Kohanaiki Church; in the vicinity of the present-day Lee property). We would walk from Honokōhau to Kohanaiki to gather the lau hala. My grandmother also taught the Japanese women who lived around us how to weave, because they all wanted to learn from her.

I also regularly walked the mauka-makai trails from the uplands to Kaloko and Honokōhau. This was in the 1930s (up to the time prior to World War II), at the time when tūtū Pali Ka'awa and my older brother Bill (William) Keanaaina, gathered the awa and mullet from the Kaloko fishpond. They packed the fish in cleaned kerosene cans and would then transport the fish from Kaloko, past Honokōhau, and on to Kailua to the area near the present-day Firestone building, formerly tūtū Kealoha's house.

My brother them (I sometimes went along) would travel the old Alanui Aupuni from Kaloko, through Honokōhau and on to Kailua. It took about two hours to travel from Kaloko to Kailua. Uncle Pali them would pack the awa and other fish in the kerosene cans, cover them with burlap bags to keep the fish cool, and load them onto donkeys. When they reached Kailua, my grandpa would be there waiting for the fish, where the Alanui Aupuni enter Kailua. Grandpa was there with his wagon.

³ Malaea Ha'au's father was J.W. Ha'au of Kohanaiki, who also served in various government positions in Kona, under the Hawaiian Kingdom.

He had blocks of ice (from AmFac), that he used to keep the fish cool. He would then take the fish to deliver to various individuals and stores. My brothers Alec (Kapānui), William, and Sam were the ones who usually took the fish from Kaloko to Kailua.

My grandfather had the lease of the Kaloko Fishpond from Stillman of the Maguire Estate (Hu'ehu'e Ranch)... Grandpa then only fished from the Kaloko pond, and did not fish in the Honokōhau ponds. Uncle Pali lived at Honokōhau, not far from the big pond ('Aimakapā), but I don't know if he or uncle Kanakamaika'i then fished from the ponds. Their main fishing, that I know of was from the sea, the 'ōpelu and other fish were their livelihood.

We would go down the old trail from Kohanaiki to Kaloko, to work on the pond when my grandpa leased it. I think the trail (makai) comes out basically where the gate that goes into the park is now. My oldest brothers would go lay net in the night, and then at three or four o'clock, they would go pick up the nets. They would set nets and pick them up from a little canoe with uncle Pali. Uncle Pali was the captain for them, he would direct my brothers Alec, William, and Sam, in how to lay the nets and collect the fish. He taught my brothers the history of the area, and how to care for the pond; what was kapu, and how to fish down there at Kaloko and Honokōhau...

My father also used to make imu (stone mounds) in the Kaloko Fishpond near the mākāhā. He'd do this one day, and the next morning when he got up, he would go throw the net, and in that way, he caught all the fish that had gone into the imu. My grandmother and I also used to go catch 'ōpae in the pond. It was mostly the white 'ōpae (kowea). Grandma made her own ka'e'e (scoop net) to catch the 'ōpae. We used the 'ōpae for bait, and they were also good to eat. Using the 'ōpae, my grandma would go kā mākoi (pole fish) for po'opa'a, mamo and other fish like that along the shore. We caught the 'ōpae right inside the pond. We would also gather limu, eat fish, whatever.

One of the things that I remember, is that my grandpa would always give fish to whoever passed by along the trail. He would aloha the people, call to them and give them fish. I thought he was kind of a hard man, but he always worked hard, and had a good heart, he always shared with others.

We had our big net house about 20 feet away from the Kaloko pond, on the right hand side. We also had a hale where we stayed. (Now the park has it's restroom in the area where our house was.) We would bring our drinking water down on the donkeys, from mauka, but for bathing and other uses, we used the brackish water from a small pond.

(Saw the guardian mo'o of Kaloko Pond; also heard that lei hala were offered to the mo'o):
I saw the mo'o at Kaloko. One time I saw the reddish-brown thing in the pond, and I asked my grandmother what it was. She said, "That's the mo'o."

The mo'o was the kia'i or guardian of the pond. The old people used to mālama the mo'o and they would feed her the hala, the lei of hala. You don't throw the leis away, you would give it to the mo'o. When we would go to the pond, grandpa would always go to the makai side first, along the wall, and he would ask permission of the mo'o first, before going fishing. So they respected her...

(Discusses other sites at Kaloko):

I remember that old cemetery makai, at Kaloko. There are plenty graves there. There was also a grave next to the lua wai (waterhole) that we had down there... Before when we were young, we would walk along the Kaloko-Honokōhau shore, it was all open, not like now with all the bushes. There were also some cattle down there, but not too much.

(Recollections of life at Honokōhau ca. 1930-1942):

Sometimes we would also go makai right from near our house in Honokōhau, on the ranch land. The ranch trail went past Isimoto's house (Isimoto was a Honokōhau coffee farmer). There is a gate that marks the area of the trail now. Grandpa would usually go down to the Honokōhau village to take things down to uncle Kanakamaika'i and uncle Pali mā. He would also take 'ōpelu and other fish that they had caught from the ocean to sell in Kailua... I remember the name 'Aimakapā, but don't remember grandpa getting fish from the pond...

I went to Honokōhau School, which was next to Kanakamaika'i's house, and tūtū Punihaole lived right next to there as well. (Looking at Register Map No. 1280 – we discussed the relationship of Kanakamaika'i to Kalua, and the location of Kalua's house makai at Honokōhau Iki, and the 'ili of Elepaio, in relationship to the school lot.)

In the uplands of Honokōhau, we also had māla 'ai (garden plots), this was on the ranch land (near where James Greenwell's present-day house is). We grew several varieties of dry land taro. Grandma used to gather it in a large sack and then once a week (Tuesdays), Higashi Poi Factory would pick up the taro, and then on Friday, bring back the poi which had been made from the taro.

Besides the ponds, my older brothers also worked mauka for Greenwells on the ranch. In the area mauka, around the junction, there were also coffee farms, taro patches, and other planting areas. Had Japanese families around there, and there were also avocados papayas, and 'ulu growing there.

(Discussing other churches of the Kekaha region, Malaea shared that):

Tūtū Punihaole told me about some of the churches of the Kekaha region. That's how I heard of the old reverend George P. Ka'ōnohimaka. While I've heard about him, he is not in our genealogy. When I was young, I don't recall that we went to Mauna Ziona church.

My grandpa them were with Uncle Kanakamaika'i (in the Ho'omana Na'auao Church). The Kohanaiki church was not in use when I was born. Grandma Malaea told me that they used to have a church there, but it was closed.

I had heard from aunty Margaret Spinney that there used to be a church at Honokōhau makai, but I never saw it. It was gone by the time I was born. I did hear that the lumber from the church was taken to make a house in Kailua. The house was near the Tradewinds, in back of the post office at Lanihau. I think it was Ka'aikala them (Spinney relatives) who got the lumber and made the house. I went to that house sometimes... I don't know about the pā ilina (cemetery) above on Honokōhau pond on the 'a'ā...

(Looking at family albums, and discussing the immediate genealogy):

Parents: Kahele – Kalua Kanemano.

Children: Keanaaina, Luka, and Makahi (Makahi married Wahineaea). (Puamana) Keanaaina, Luka, and Makahi were brothers. Keanaaina was the first name of one brother, and it became the last name of his branch of the family (Malaea's line).

(Puamana) Keanaaina (born ca. 1853), married Kaiwi (Kipikane) Pa'ahao (ca. 1853-1914).

William Nu'uaniu Keanaaina Sr. (1876-1942), married Malaea Noenoe Ha'au (1875-1940).

Child: William Nuuanu Keanaaina Jr. (1896-1940), married Emily Kopa Kapanui (1905-1977).

Children – (oldest to youngest): William (1922), Rose (1924), Adele (1925), Samuel (1926), Malaea (1928), John (1929), Francis (1930), Abraham (1932), Luther (1934), Amy (1935), Phoebe (1937), Mathew (1939), and Norman (1940).

An older half-sister Hattie (Manoa), and half-brother Alec Kapanui are also counted by aunty as family members.

(Interview released on August 30, 2000)